Francesca Albanese must be fired from the UN - editorial

April 19, 2023

By JPOST EDITORIAL

The Jerusalem Post

https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-739603

As deadly Palestinian terrorism against Israelis continues unabated, some have tried to justify the attacks – and some have gone even further.

In a stunning exercise in victim blaming, UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese has denied that the country has the right to defend itself against Palestinian terrorism.

“Israel has a right to defend itself, but can’t claim it when it comes to the people it oppresses [or] whose land it colonizes,” she tweeted on April 8.

Her grotesque tweet came in the wake of the murder of a British-Israeli mother and her two daughters. Lucy, 48, Maia, 20 and Rina Dee, 15, were killed in a shooting attack near the Hamra Junction in the Jordan Valley as they drove to Tiberias on April 7 during the Passover holiday. Later the same day, a 35-year-old Italian tourist, Alessandro Parini, was murdered in a car-ramming attack in Tel Aviv.

Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism Minister Amichai Chikli on Friday called for Albanese’s dismissal. In his letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Dr. Volker Türk, Chikli wrote that the UN “is failing to uphold its own commitment to protect fundamental human rights for all and to apply equal treatment of all its member states by allowing Ms. Albanese to continue to spew hatred, antisemitism and incite violence.”

Far from apologizing, however, Albanese doubled down. Referring to the biblical imperative Chikli had mentioned in his letter, she responded in a sneering tweet: “I wonder how the 3,000-year-old ‘moral responsibility not to kill’ can be reconciled with the thousands of Palestinians killed since 2007 in oPt [“Occupied Palestinian Territory],” citing figures that included terrorists killed during wars in Gaza since 2008.

As Chikli noted in his letter, Albanese’s “reprehensible, irresponsible and terror-inciting remarks called into question Israel’s very right to defend the lives of its citizens” and “explicitly denies the right to life and personal security of many Jewish citizens of the State of Israel.”

Albanese violates the UN Code of Conduct for Special Rapporteurs and indeed the basic principles of human rights upon which the United Nations was founded.

This wasn’t the first time that she had openly supported Palestinian “resistance” and engaged in rhetoric viewed as antisemitic.

In 2014, Albanese alleged that the “Jewish lobby” controls America, invoking a classic antisemitic trope.

In 2021, Albanese equated the events surrounding Israel’s creation, which Palestinians call the Nakba (catastrophe), with the Holocaust, stating that “Just as tragic, terrible, unspeakable, is the tragedy that befell the Jewish people with the Shoah, so for the Palestinians, the Nakba represents the crumbling of the connective tissue of a people.”

In December 2022, the Israeli watchdog NGO Monitor noted that Albanese had participated in events hosted by organizations with alleged ties to terror groups and that promote the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel; had consistently dismissed Israel’s security concerns, denying Israel’s right to self-defense; and in her October 2022 report to the UN Human Rights Council described a convicted terrorist as a “human rights defender.”

It should go without saying that there is no excuse for terrorism. Terrorists do not carry out background checks on their victims. They murder who they can, where they can, when they can.

When a terrorist rams a vehicle into a crowded bus stop or a promenade, or when terrorists open fire on a passing vehicle, blow up passengers on a bus or attack people at a restaurant, there can be no justification – neither where the victims reside, from where they have come, nor in which religion they believe.

Dehumanizing people by referring to them as “settlers,” as Albanese has done repeatedly, is a despicable and transparent way of attempting to justify attacks against them. Excusing or justifying Palestinian terrorism, denying Israelis the right to self-defense and engaging in anti-Jewish rhetoric to encourage more terrorism.

Albanese’s deeply biased approach to the issues on which she is supposed to report impartially is immoral and inexcusable, and it is entirely at odds with the conduct expected of a senior UN official. It is time Guterres and Türk took responsibility and fired her, in the name of the values their organization is meant to protect.